



## Remediation & Redevelopment Program 2000-2001 Annual Report



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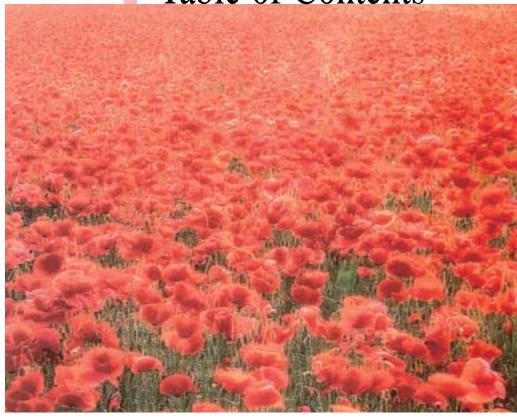
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# A Message from the Bureau Director



Building on the momentum of the last 30 years to protect and preserve our valuable natural resources, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources continues to make ardent strides in the cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated properties throughout the state. With the valuable assistance of the DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment Program, Wisconsin communities have achieved success in improving the environmental and economic quality of life as we enter the new millenium.

In presenting our third annual report about the progress in the area of remediation and redevelopment, we hope you'll get a good snapshot of our 2000-2001 accomplishments. This report not only summarizes our achievements in brownfields, state-funded cleanup, spills

prevention and cleanup, and Superfund, but also highlights successful programs like our new Dry Cleaner Environmental Fund and Brownfields Site Assessment Grant Program.

We also continue to proactively seek out our customers' ideas and input, and work with them to improve our efforts in effectively and consistently cleaning up and reusing sites. As part of that initiative, the Remediation and Redevelopment Program continues to pursue new ways to make our information and assistance readily available to our customers through outreach discussions, use of the Internet, and new Geographic Information System technologies.

We still have a long road ahead. While Wisconsin is a national leader in cleanup and redevelopment, many more contaminated properties around the state need our attention, not only to address environmental contamination, but also for effective land-use decisions and green space preservation. The first decade of the new millenium presents many challenges to our staff, but with a sound base of success to build upon, we feel confident in our abilities to help protect and preserve the health of Wisconsin's environment, citizens, businesses and communities in this decade and beyond.

Mark F. Giesfeldt



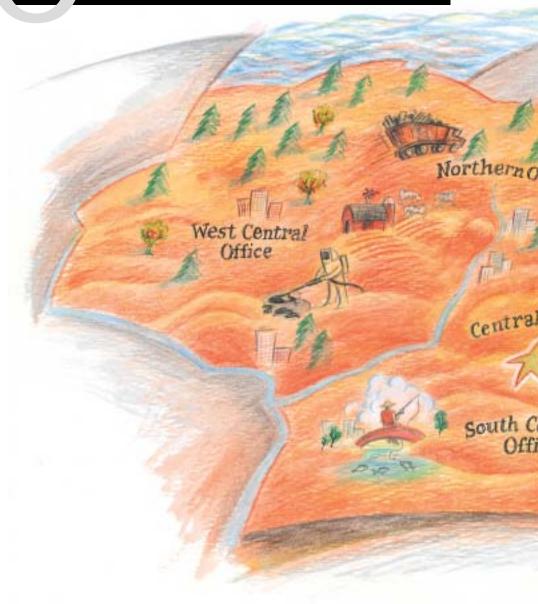
# Our Mission

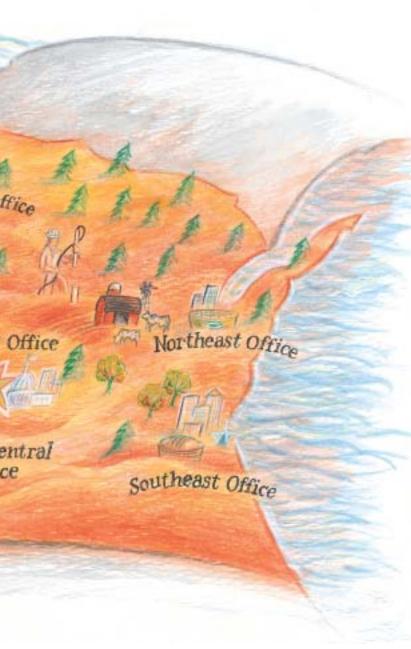
The Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) program promotes the cleanup and return of contaminated properties in Wisconsin to environmentally safe and productive use by relying on public, private, and community partnerships.

In September 1995, as part of an agency-wide reorganization, the Department of Natural Resources - with advice from various customers - created the Remediation and Redevelopment program to bring under one umbrella all agency staff responding to environmental contamination.

The Remediation and Redevelopment program now focuses on restoring contaminated properties, and also on returning restored properties to productive use. Program areas under the Remediation and Redevelopment umbrella include: state-funded cleanups, spills and abandoned container responses, leaking underground storage tanks sites with multiple contaminants or significant groundwater contamination, brownfields cleanup and redevelopment, federal Superfund sites, closed landfiil sites causing contamination and hazardous waste corrective actions.

Organizational Chart





The RR Program employs the team concept to organize much of its work on contaminated properties. These teams consist of staff from throughout Wisconsin, which are located in the DNR's five state regions - Northeast, Northern, Southeast, South Central, and West Central. Staff from the central office in Madison also make up part of the RR's team membership.

Standing teams in the RR
Program include: NR 700
Implementation, Environmental
Monitoring, Hazardous
Substance Spill Response,
Information Technology
Oversight, Land Recycling,
Outreach, Standards and
Streamlining, and State-Funded
Response.

In 2000-2001, RR Program staff were involved in closing approximately 600 sites and assisted with more than 110 redevelopment actions.

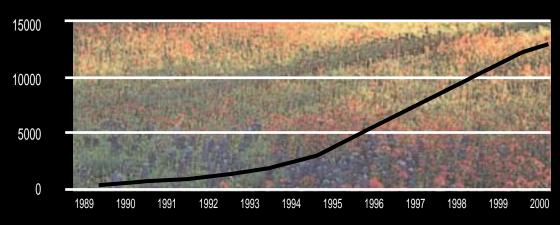
# 2000-2001 Highlights

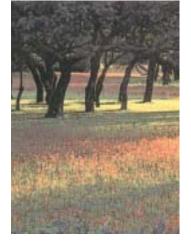
The RR Program is responsible for several program areas in the DNR, including spill response, brownfields site assessment and redevelopment, and the new drycleaner reimbursement program. However, oversight of cleanups and the closing of contamination cases remain two of the RR Program's most important tasks.

According to DNR estimates, more than 23,000 contamination incidents have been reported to the DNR. Since 1989, when the Department began tracking site closures, nearly 14,000 sites have been closed (please see chart below).

"Closed" sites mean the parties responsible for the contaminated properties have investigated and cleaned up the sites according to state standards. Some closures take one or two years, other sites take several years due to contamination problems, limited resources, reluctant landowners and other factors.

#### CUMULATIVE CLEANUPS COMPLETED





In recent years, Department staff have closed about 500 sites per year. These sites included gas stations, factories, former manufactured gas plants and drycleaner operations. In order to cleanup and close these sites according to state law, DNR staff have worked with a wide variety of public and private parties, including local government officials, developers, lenders, business owners and private individuals.

In 2000-2001, the RR Program closed nearly 600 sites. As part of closing these sites, staff not only worked on technical review of site investigations, evaluation of proposed remedies and final cleanups, but they were also involved in the redevelopment aspects of many properties. Program staff also responded to approximately 1,600 spills that occurred throughout the state during that time.

In addition, staff were involved in more than 110 redevelopment assistance actions in the last two years. Often, this redevelopment work requires as much - if not more - effort from staff due to the complex nature of many contaminated sites. Redevelopment assistance from RR staff includes:

- face-to-face meetings with groups and individuals interested in the cleanup and reuse of the property;
- providing liability assurance letters to municipalities, lenders, private owners and those individuals leasing contaminated property;
- reviewing Phase 1 and Phase 2 environmental assessments performed by lenders;
- assisting with cleanup agreements supporting local governments cancellation of unpaid property taxes;
- · assisting with negotiated agreements for cleanup between several parties; and
- providing certificates of completion for contamination on portions or for the entire property.

Unfortunately, while DNR staff close hundreds of sites each year, more contaminated properties are discovered. In 2000, approximately 750 new contaminated sites were added to the DNR's list of contaminated properties in need of some type of investigation or clean-up action. To date, more than 9,000 contaminated sites remain on the Department's list.

We will continue to work with our public and private partners to ensure that all the contaminated properties, new and old, will be properly cleaned up and closed in as timely and efficient manner as possible.

## "The DNR appreciates all the assistance provided by you, the citizens... It has been a long time in coming for many of you to see this day."

Paul Kozol, RR Project Manager, in a letter to local Davy Creek residents

## State-Funded Cleanup

#### DAVY CREEK - A SEDIMENT CLEANUP MODEL

To the casual observer, Davy Creek is a quaint, barely noticeable stream that meanders its way through southeastern Dodge County just west of Milwaukee. Typical of many streams in Wisconsin that invoke memories of quiet hikes and warm summer days, Davy Creek unfortunately carries a history that is also typical of many streams in Wisconsin.

The tiny creek flows past the unincorporated community of Ashippun prior to emptying into the Rock River near Oconomowoc. Ashippun was also the home of the Oconomowoc Electroplating Company, Inc. (OECI), which started operations in 1957 and closed in 1991.



Davy Creek during remediation, where workers installed a temporary road to facilitate cleanup of the creek (photo by Paul Kozol, DNR).

The company originally discharged wastewater directly to adjacent wetlands connected to Davy Creek. Later, OECI used lagoons for wastewater treatment, but wastewater often overflowed the lagoons and seeped into the adjacent wetlands. The wetlands and Davy Creek sediments became contaminated with heavy metals - cadmium, chromium, copper, nickel, zinc, as well as cyanide.

#### Superfund

Through combined federal and state efforts and after the listing of OECI as a Superfund site, cleanup of the OECI site, adjacent wetlands, and Davy Creek commenced. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), through its Superfund authority and resources, cleaned up the OECI site, adjacent wetlands and several hundred feet of Davy Creek between 1992 and 1995.

Superfund cleanup costs totaled about \$20 million. The State of Wisconsin's cleanup share was 10 percent, or \$2 million. The state's share of the cleanup funds was financed by the state Environmental Fund.

Although EPA cleaned up the small stretch of Davy Creek immediately adjacent to OECI, there remained a longer downstream stretch with low-level contaminants.

#### State Cleanup

Because OECI was no longer in existence, the DNR proceeded to cleanup the downstream portion of Davy Creek through a state-funded response using the Environmental Fund. The RR Program staff proceeded with a two-phase remediation effort after working closely with the DNR water programs to design the cleanup.

The first phase occurred in the summer of 1998. The DNR contracted with Pollesch-Kinas Excavating, Inc., to install a temporary



Davy Creek after the DNR completed its remediation project (photo by Paul Kozol, DNR).

road along a 2,300-foot stretch of Davy Creek. In March 1999, DNR began Phase II and contracted with Superior Special Services, Inc., to remediate the channel and remove the temporary road. Superior removed 6,800 tons of contaminated material from the creek and hauled the material to nearby Glacier Ridge Landfill.

Total costs for design, remediation, and oversight on this DNR state-funded response were just under \$1 million.

Today, a short time after workers completed the excavation, the stream and its surroundings appear natural. Water is flowing freely through Davy Creek, the stream banks are well established with vegetation that is virtually indistinguishable from the nearby surroundings, and aquatic life and wildlife populate the Davy Creek watershed.

Paul Kozol, the DNR's Davy Creek project manager, said the Department will continue to monitor the stream flow and vegetative re-growth over the next two years.

The Davy Creek project is an example of a sediment cleanup. The project is not a typical "tank removal and cleanup" or "landfill cap" most often associated with RR cleanup programs. Sediment cleanups remove contaminants from stream and lake bottoms in order to improve water quality, restore a viable fish and aquatic life community, provide greater opportunities for outdoor recreation and minimize threats to human health.

Kozol, in a May 2000, letter to Davy Creek concerned citizens announcing the completion of the project, wrote: "DNR appreciates all the assistance provided by you, the citizens, along with local governments, organizations and state agencies. It has been a long time in coming for many of you to see this day."

"The quick response, treatment of the emergency and absence of injury...can be attributed to the cooperation of the potential responsible parties as well as local, state and federal agencies." Roxanne Chronert, RR Spills Coordinator, Northeast Region



THE OSHKOSH FIRE - RESPONDING TO A COMMUNITY EMERGENCY

#### Saturday, December 16, 2000 - A 911 Call And Evacuation

Late in the afternoon, a concerned citizen in Oshkosh called 911 to report smoke emanating from a rail boxcar located on a railroad spur on property owned by the Hydrite Chemical Company.



Workers unload the burning totes filled with sodium hydrosulfite from the boxcar (photo by Superior Special Services, Inc.).

The Oshkosh Fire Department immediately responded to the incident. An individual from the DNR Spill Response Team and representatives from the Hydrite Chemical Company and Wisconsin Central Limited Railroad responded soon thereafter.

After consulting with these individuals, firefighters determined that the rail boxcar contained 140,000 pounds of dry sodium hydrosulfite, a chemical used in the paper-making process that can be harmful to humans through inhalation or ingestion. The sodium hydrosulfite was contained in 32 aluminum totes, each weighing more than two tons (4,400 pounds).

Due to the fire, explosion, and inhalation risks, a computer-modeling program was used to project the gas plume from the fire. Based on this computer model, the Unified Command - consisting of members from the Oshkosh Fire Department Hazardous Materials Team and Oshkosh Police Department, as well as representatives from the railroad and chemical companies - ordered an evacuation that affected approximately 550 families and 75 businesses.

#### Sunday, December 17, 2000 - Decision Time

On Sunday morning the Unified Command decided to move the rail car to facilitate better and safer access. Also,

in order to better assess the situation, the rail boxcar doors were opened, which revealed that all 32 totes were burning.

Command members decided to accelerate the burn overnight with the hope that a larger quantity of material would combust and be converted to elemental sulfur by the morning of December 18. At the afternoon news conference, residents were told that they could be out of their homes for 3-4 more days. However, residents were also allowed a limited return to their homes to collect clothes and other personal items.



Once the totes were removed, mechanical shears cut open the totes to expose the material for treatment (photo by Superior Special Services, Inc.).

#### Monday, December 18, 2000 - Putting The Fire Out

The treating process began by using heavy equipment to off-load one tote at a time from the boxcar. The totes were then cut open using an excavator mounted sheer. The product was removed from the totes, crushed and placed in the reaction vessels, which were large, lined watertight dumpsters.

The treatment hydrated the sodium hydrosulfite into a sulfide bleach. Sodium hydroxide was then added to the reaction vessel to maintain a pH above 10 in the water solution. The elevated pH water acted as a scrubber to contain gas emissions of sulfur dioxide and hydrogen sulfide. The water was then transferred from reaction vessels to tanker trucks and transported to the Oshkosh wastewater treatment plant.

By Monday evening, workers had treated a majority of the sodium hydrosulfite and the evacuation zone was reduced to an area immediately surrounding the incident.

During the rest of the week, workers treated the remaining product, removed the remaining waste from the site, and completed the emergency response with final snow removal and decontamination of equipment and affected areas.

Roxanne Chronert, spills coordinator for the RR Program in the DNR's Northeast Region, summed up the successful response: "the quick response and treatment of the emergency and the absence of injury to the residents of Oshkosh or the emergency response team can be attributed to the cooperation of the potential responsible parties as well as local, state and federal agencies that formed the Unified Command."

Site Assessment Grants, totaling \$1.45 million, went to large and small Wisconsin communities to investigate and cleanup troublesome contaminated properties.

# Brownfields

#### NEW GRANT PROGRAM HELPS 35 COMMUNITIES ASSESS AND CLEAN UP BROWNFIELDS

The DNR's Site Assessment Grant (SAG) program was created in the 1999-2001 State Biennial Budget to help large and small communities investigate and cleanup brownfield properties (abandoned or under-used properties with real or perceived contamination). The State Legislature allocated \$1.45 million to the SAG program based upon recommendations from the 1998 Brownfields Study Group (please see story page 13).

The SAG is a new model of brownfields grant programs that is flexible, fast, user-friendly and effective. Within four months of staff distributing the SAG application, the DNR received 110 applications, with 40 percent coming from com-



Bill's Mini Mart in the City of Pittsville was demolished in 2000 using a Site Assessment Grant from the DNR. This building was the source of petroleum contamination in nearby soil and groundwater (photo courtesy of the City of Pittsville).

munities with a population under 30,000. The funding was awarded to 35 communities for 51 sites located across the state.

Local governments, tribal communities, and housing, community, and economic development authorities were able to utilize the \$1.45 million to fund up to 80 percent of investigation and cleanup activities at brownfields. Two levels of grant funding were available: small grants up to \$30,000, and large grants between \$30,000 and \$100,000.

Some of the key innovations making the program successful include:

- an active public advisory group that provided input on the development of the SAG program;
- maximum flexibility provided to local governments to assess a brownfield property, sell it or proceed with remediation;
- funding of "orphan" or previously ineligible activities, such as tank removals, not funded by other state-agency programs;
- funding of activities that helped clarify the contamination status of the property through investigation and removal of impediments to reuse; these activities included asbestos abatement, removal of abandoned containers and removal of above-ground and below-ground storage tanks;
- a financial commitment from each community applying for a SAG grant; and
- a stream-lined application process; SAG applications were not only
  easily accessible on the DNR's web site, but grants were also
  awarded within five weeks of the application due dates.



Demolition and removal of the former Bill's Mini Mart has eliminated an eyesore and public safety threat, and allowed for the beneficial reuse of the site (photo courtesy of the City of Pittsville).

## The Brownfields Study Group -

Partnerships That Work

As part of the 1997-99 State Biennial Budget, the State Legislature created the Brownfields Study Group to review Wisconsin's brownfields initiative and make recommendations to improve and enhance the state's remediation and redevelopment efforts. The Brownfields Study Group consisted of 30 individuals from six state agencies and individuals from local governments, businesses, environmental attorneys, consultants, environmental groups and academicians.

After meeting throughout 1998, the Study Group presented its findings to the State Legislature in 1999, recommending more than 75 changes or additions to brownfields legislation. These proposals included changes to state brownfields funding, local government liability exemptions and voluntary party cleanup efforts. Many of these proposals were included in the 1999-01 State Biennial Budget, including the new Brownfields Site Assessment Grant program (SAG), which helped more than 35 communities conduct activities on 109 acres of contaminated property (see story page 12-13).

In 2000, the State Legislature requested that the DNR re-convene the Study Group to provide recommendations for the 2001-03 State Biennial Budget. The Study Group presented its second report to the Legislature, and many of those proposals were then incorporated into the draft budget, including the expansion of the SAG. At the time of publication, some recommendations are still in the draft budget, and Legislators hope to have a final budget signed by Governor Scott McCallum by fall 2001.

The state's new drycleaner grant program has paid out all funds requested and DNR staff anticipate no shortfalls by the end of 2001.



With Chapter NR 169,
Wis. Adm. Code, effective February 1, 2000,
DNR is now able to
reimburse drycleaners
for eligible cleanup costs
associated with releases
to the environment from
their facilities. The Dry
Cleaner Environmental



Washington Square Mall before site remediation and redevelopment. This mall was a vacant, dilapidated retail center that is currently eligible for the Drycleaner Environmental Response Fund (photo courtesy of Arcadis Geraghty & Miller).

Response Fund (DERF) program, developed by the drycleaning industry, helps drycleaners pay for cleanups asso-

ciated with releases from their facilities. Each of the approximately 350 drycleaners in the

state pays 1.8% of their gross receipts on drycleaning into this fund, and the DNR uses those funds to reimburse eligible drycleaners for their cleanup costs.

In 2000, the DNR received 28 applications requesting more than \$1.5 million in reimbursements. Of those applications received, after deductibles were assessed, more than \$900,000 was deemed eligible and paid back directly to the drycleaners. While there was concern that the fund would be insufficient to reimburse even the initial applications received by the agency, to date the fund is flush and the DNR anticipates no funding shortfall for 2001. The fund generates approximately \$1 million annually.

In addition to reviewing applications, the DNR staffs the Governor's Dry Cleaning Environmental Response Council, which works with the DNR in assessing program effectiveness and needs. In 2000, the Council and the DNR identified a number of statutory changes for inclusion in the 2001-2003 biennial budget that will further improve and streamline this program.



Washington Square Mall after redevelopment. Cleanup continues at the site (photo courtesy of Arcadis Geraghty & Miller).

# DNR and EPA officials move ahead with the next phases of Superfund cleanup at the Fox River in northeastern Wisconsin.



#### SUPERFUND EFFORTS AIMED AT WATERSHED CLEANUP

For decades, residents in northeastern Wisconsin have seen the effects from a long history of uncontrolled industrial and municipal pollution in the Fox River. During the last 20 years, local, state and federal authorities began working together with private companies, community organizations and the general public to map out a plan to clean up the Fox.

Many of these efforts have been successful and water quality for the Fox River has improved. However, the main focus for continued investigation and cleanup has been the contaminated sediments in the river, which contain high concentrations of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in several areas. Studies suggest that the Fox River has contributed as much as 70 percent of the annual PCB load to Lake Michigan.

With EPA providing resources and the DNR serving as the lead agency for the Fox River cleanup, DNR officials released a draft Remediation Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) in February, 1999. The RI/FS describes investigation and cleanup options, and identifies the most appropriate options for each area of the river needing cleanup.

The DNR has also worked to remove contaminated sediments from the lower Fox River through pilot dredging projects at two locations, the SMU 56/57 and Deposit N sites. From 1998 to 2000, contractors removed approximately 8,200 cubic yards of sediment from Deposit N and more than 82,000 cubic yards of sediment from SMU 56/57. From these dredged sediments, nearly 2,200 pounds of PCBs were removed and disposed of in a hazardous waste landfill.

Following the release of the RI/FS, numerous comments were received from the public, local government officials, representatives from industry and other interested parties during the 45-day public comment period. At the conclusion of the public comment period, DNR and EPA staff began revising the RI/FS and expect to release a final version, along with a proposed remediation plan, in the fall of 2001.



Workers excavate a test pit in February 2001, to investigate contamination at the Ashland/NSP Lakefront Site in northern Wisconsin. The site has been proposed for the Superfund National Priority List (NPL). Investigations have shown the site to be contaminated with manufactured gas plant and other wastes, including benzene, toluene and xylene (photo by Jamie Dunn, DNR).

"Not only were environmental contaminants removed, but an old industrial area was renewed and the city will receive an increase in economic activity in an area that was underused for many years."

Loren Brumberg, DNR CenturyTel Project Manager

### **Success Stories**

#### CENTURYTEL - A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP FOR LA CROSSE

#### History

The City of La Crosse has a long history of commercial and industrial development, starting in the mid- to late-1800s. Located along the Mississippi River, the city was an ideal location for many growing industries, including shipping, lumber and railroad operations.

As the 20th Century progressed, many sites in this urban area that began as commercial or industrial properties later became brownfields. Recently, a number of these properties received a redevelopment boost, thanks to the hard work of local partners.



The CenturyTel, Inc., property before redevelopment in 1998. The property was part of the Brownfields Environmental Assessment Program (BEAP) (photo by Loren Brumberg DNR).

The Riverside Redevelopment Project is a large project in La Crosse encompassing more than twelve different properties. A portion of the project, known as the CenturyTel, Inc., site, is made up of four properties located near La Crosse's Riverside Memorial Park. These sites also have a long history of commercial and industrial development dating back to the 19th Century, including a cooperage (barrel-making shop); a rail yard; coal, coke and salt storage areas; and a petroleum company.

#### Contamination

Various types of contamination were found at the CenturyTel sites. Soil contamination included volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and inorganics. Groundwater contamination was also present at the sites, consisting of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and inorganics.

#### Cleanup

Cleanup of the four CenturyTel sites began in 1995 when the Redevelopment Authority of the City of La Crosse performed three Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) and two Phase II ESAs on the properties. In 1998, RR staff performed Phase I and II ESAs. Complete investigations, planning and final cleanup were completed in 1999 with the approval of local DNR staff.

Besides the removal of underground petroleum storage tanks, workers also removed more than 4,500 tons of lead-contaminated soil, 820 tons of PAH-contaminated soil and re-used more than 550 tons of soil for backfill at the site.

#### Redevelopment

Working with City of La Crosse officials, representatives from Century Telephone Enterprises, Inc. (CenturyTel), began construction in the fall of 1999 on a 150,000 square foot building that will serve as their Midwest regional telecommunications headquarters. City officials expect an increase in property values of more than \$25 million, retention of 500 service jobs, and creation of more than 100 new service jobs for the La Crosse community thanks to the CenturyTel project.

The Control Tables handsurface of the construction have in 1000 (thate

The CenturyTel, Inc., headquarters after construction began in 1999 (photo by Dave Carper, DNR).

Loren Brumberg, RR project manager for the site, called CenturyTel an excellent example of effective pub-

lic-private sector partnerships. "Not only were environmental contaminants removed, but an old industrial area was renewed and the city will receive an increase in economic activity in an area that was underused for many years," said Brumberg.



The CenturyTel, Inc., headquarters was completed in 2001. It sits along the banks of the Mississippi River (photo by Dave Carper, DNR).

Baraboo City officials utilized state brownfields grants to investigate and clean up a property long known as an eyesore in the community.

# Success Stories

BARABOO SITE REAPS BENEFITS OF STATE PROGRAMS

Baraboo is a medium-sized Wisconsin community, tucked amongst the scenic rolling hills of central Wisconsin that bear the city's name. Due to it's location, Baraboo quickly became a center for commercial and industrial activity in the 19th Century. Chicago & Northwestern built a railyard there in the 1870s, and by the 1890s it was one of the largest railyards in the state.



The site of the new Baraboo City Services Center had many past uses which contaminated the site, including a railyard, a scrapyard, and a warehouse (photo courtesy of MSA Professionals).

Trains rumbled in and out of the C&NW Baraboo yards for more than half a century, but in the 1950s the yard was shut down for good. Zachary Onikul, a local scrap dealer, bought the property, built a large warehouse and ran his scrap yard there for another 40 years before closing the yard in the early 1990s. Mr. Onikul's widow rented the warehouse in the 1990s to a local earthmoving contractor, who used the property as a staging and repair yard.



Construction of the new Baraboo City Services Center began in 2001 (photo by Jessica Milz, DNR).

#### Contamination

Due to the long history of industrial and rail activities at the site, the property's soil and groundwater were contaminated with petroleum constituents, lead, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB). In almost all areas of the yard, metal, car parts, wood, plastic and other debris were found in the upper three feet of the soil.

#### Cleanup and Redevelopment

The City of Baraboo performed Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments on this site in 1997 and 1998. In 2000, the City of Baraboo received a \$30,000 DNR Site Assessment Grant for various activities at this site. An agreement with the DNR allows for capping the surface of the site with asphalt, gravel, and the building slab without active remediation of the affected soil under the cap. The site has also been cleared of all existing buildings, refuse, and railroad debris, and all underground storage tanks (UST's) were removed.

In 1997, the City of Baraboo announced plans to build a \$5 million public works facility on seven acres of blighted, under-used land in the downtown area, including the former rail yard property. Local officials conducted condemnation proceedings to acquire the properties, making the city eligible for the state's liability exemption for local governments. The liability exemption was created to ease liability fears of local governments trying to cleanup and redevelop brownfields properties. The liability exemption allowed the city to forge ahead with the project after contamination was discovered on the property.

Today, construction of the new
Baraboo City Service Center is under
way. In 2000, the city received a
\$250,000 Brownfields Grant from the
Department of Commerce to assist
with construction of the building. The
building will house four city departments, and city officials hope the
site's cleanup and redevelopment will
spur more downtown revitalization
while discouraging green space
development outside the city.



The Baraboo City Services Center is scheduled to be completed by 2002 (architect's rendering courtesy of Angus-Young Associates, Inc.).

# RR Program staff - through the use of new technologies - are working hard to increase the information gathering power of our customers.

### The Future

#### **REACHING OUT TO OUR CUSTOMERS**

With the efforts to enhance the cleanup and reuse of contaminated properties in Wisconsin, a lot of discussions focus on the "tools of our trade" - technical tools, policy tools, and financial tools.

Rarely, though, is enough attention given to the tools used to seek input and involvement from the public. This communication or outreach work helps address pertinent questions facing citizens about contaminated properties in their neighborhood, such as:

- How do I know if there are any contaminated properties near my home?
- How do I get information about the potential for drinking water contamination or other health threats that may impact my neighborhood?
- Where can I go to ask questions, voice my concerns or provide suggestions on the cleanup and costs to pay for that cleanup?

RR Program staff have made a conscious effort to focus on improving and enhancing our outreach efforts. In the past, these efforts have focused on more traditional means of communication - the Internet, newsletters, fact sheets, and information "hot lines."



Recently, however, the RR Program has taken a more proactive approach. The Program's new Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Registry gives natural resource professionals a map showing properties where the responsible party is using post-closure natural attenuation as part of the cleanup remedy. The GIS will be available on-line to Internet users, and complements the program's Internet database known as BRRTS On The Web (BRRTS stands for Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System).

Through BRRTS and the GIS Registry, the RR Program greatly increases the information gathering power for local governments, developers, consultants and the general public to use in their decision-making process as they revitalize their communities.

Program staff are also working to expand public information requirements for the DNR and responsible parties at specific contaminated sites. We hope this effort will enhance the public's ability to get timely information on key issues about investigation, proposed cleanup remedies and cleanup progress for sites in their communities.

With our focus on bringing information closer to our customers as well as expanding our audiences and their abilities to tell us what they think, the RR Program is reaching out with the best tools available to help Wisconsin residents revitalize their communities in environmentally and economically sustainable ways.



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